

Upcounty Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2011
(July 2010-June 2011)



*Prepared by the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board
in cooperation with the
Upcounty Regional Services Center
Montgomery County, Maryland*





Montgomery County Executive

Isiah Leggett

Montgomery County Council

Valerie Ervin, President

Roger Berliner, Vice President

Phil Andrews

Marc Elrich

Nancy Floreen

George Leventhal

Nancy Navarro

Craig Rice

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*Upcounty Citizens
Advisory Board*



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR 2010-2011

It has been a distinct pleasure to serve as Chair of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board for the 2010-2011 term. The Board consists of men and women from the northern area of the county who are dedicated to fostering a healthy and fruitful life for the citizens of this large geographic part of Montgomery County. The past year has been a trying time for the whole county as many issues have been overshadowed by the need of the County Executive and Council to address a multimillion dollar budget deficit. Nonetheless, the Board has tackled a number of significant land use and quality of life issues and has forwarded its recommendations to the County Executive and Council.

Last fall, the Board met with the Department of Economic Development's Chief of Staff, the Chair of the Planning Board, the Director of the Planning Department, and the heads of several upcounty chambers to discuss growth in this region and zoning reform needed for evolving urban centers. As a result, the Board in March sent a letter to the County Executive and County Council discussing our reactions and made several recommendations. The Board also presented testimony on the need to build the Corridor Cities Transitway as soon as possible, and met with the Chair of the Clarksburg Infrastructure Working Group.

With respect to Quality of Life issues, the Board hosted a forum in the fall in which we met with representatives from a number of civic organizations and assistance-based groups. The Board also welcomed the new Milestone fire station last summer and continues to support the North Potomac Recreation Center as it nears completion. Last fall, the Board met with a representative of the Department of Health and Human Services to discuss the aging of Montgomery County and specific issues for seniors, and in April we met with the Interim Provost of Montgomery College-Germantown campus and a representative from Holy Cross Hospital to discuss the new Biosciences Education Center on the campus, for which ground has already been broken, as well as Holy Cross' plans to construct a hospital on grounds owned by the college.

The Board greatly appreciates the dedication of the people from county government, our state delegation, and private organizations who have given their time to keep us informed about issues that affect the Upcounty. Finally, the Board could accomplish little without the dedicated director and staff of the Upcounty Regional Service Center. The Board has expressed its concern over the reorganization of the Regional Service Centers and expects that after such reorganization, the link between the Regional Service Centers and Citizens' Advisory Boards will remain strong. That working relationship is paramount if citizens are to have input into the important issues that arise in our County.

Respectfully,

Joel Cockrell, Chair

About the Board

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/upcounty

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (UCAB) provides advice to the County Executive, County Council, and Upcounty Regional Director on issues affecting the northern portion of the county known as the “Upcounty” in addition to acting as a two-way communication link between the County and the community. The twenty volunteer members of UCAB are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

Geographic Scope The Upcounty region is defined as being roughly north and west of Shady Grove Road and it comprises about one-half of the geographic area of Montgomery County and one-third of its population. It ranges in character from urban to rural in communities such as Barnesville, Boyds, Clarksburg, Damascus, Darnestown, Derwood, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Goshen, Laytonsville, Montgomery Village, North Potomac and Poolesville. Therefore, UCAB’s members are selected for geographic balance as well as for diversity of background, community and professional experience and expertise.

Structure UCAB operates in public meetings and in 2010-2011 had two standing committees: the Land Use and Preservation Committee and the Quality of Life Committee. UCAB’s leadership consists of the chairperson, a first vice-chair, and a second vice-chair along with the chair of the Land Use and Preservation Committee and chair of the Quality of Life Committee. Other UCAB members also provide liaison to various other County boards and committees.

Issues After an organizational retreat in July, the UCAB and each of its committees meets monthly from September through June. The UCAB’s committees study a wide variety of issues and help to craft the board’s resulting recommendations. The Land Use and Preservation Committee has reviewed and commented on master planning practices in the Upcounty, issues related to urbanization, the County’s Growth Policy, development pressures on the Agricultural Reserve, the evolution of the Life Sciences Center at Shady Grove, issues faced by agricultural and related businesses, affordable housing, and growth of the Germantown Campus of Montgomery College. The Quality of Life Committee has reviewed and commented on out-of-school programs for youths, programs for immigrant families and children at risk, mental health services, library services, safety of young drivers and pedestrians, public safety, services for seniors, and the general health of the county’s community. Positions have been taken on many of these issues while others may continue to be examined for comment.

Recommendations During the year, UCAB interacts formally and informally with county officials, county and state agency staff, and community leaders in order to understand issues comprehensively before forwarding recommendations to the County Executive and/or County Council. UCAB also meets with the Executive during the year to discuss Upcounty priorities and to summarize their work at their annual meeting, and traditionally, the Executive’s priorities for both the operating budget and the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) have been responsive to UCAB’s recommendations. The Board has also hosted receptions for officials and community leaders in order to promote networking and the sharing of ideas. On an annual basis, the board meets with State legislators who represent the Upcounty area in Annapolis, and various county department heads to explore issues and solutions. Additionally, UCAB traditionally hosts an annual forum to solicit community comments on the CIP. Those comments are then prioritized by the board and forwarded to Executive Branch departments and the County Executive.

UCAB is staffed by the Upcounty Regional Services team. The Regional Director, Catherine Matthews, can be contacted at 240.777.8047 or via e-mail at upcounty.citizen@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board

2010-2011



left to right sitting: Robert Owolabi, 1st Vice-Chair (Boyd's), Natalia Farrar (Shady Grove), Rebecca Walker (Germantown), Joel Cockrell, Chair (Damascus), Juan Cardenas, 2nd Vice-Chair (Gaithersburg)

left to right standing: Doug Noble (Damascus), Andres Aviles (Germantown), Matthew Leakin (Germantown), Cherian Eapen (Clarksburg), and Heinz Bachmann (Dickerson)

not pictured: Terramika Bellamy (Clarksburg), Vineet Bhanot (Shady Grove), Bradley Davis (North Potomac), Andrew Einsmann (Germantown), James King (Montgomery Village), Kevin Linck (Montgomery Village), Pat Seals (North Potomac), Robert Thompson (Darnestown), James Wallace (Gaithersburg)

**Members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.*

UCAB Committee Chairs

Land Use and Preservation – Matthew Leakan

Social Issues – Natalia Farrar

Liaisons to Other Boards and Committees

Airpark Liaison Committee – Vacant

Dickerson Facilities Implementation Group – Heinz Bachmann

Germantown Master Plan Community Advisory Committee – Andres Aviles

Permitting Services Advisory Committee – Andrew Einsmann

Shady Grove Implementation Advisory Committee – Natalia Farrar

Smart Growth Initiative Implementation Advisory Group – Andres Aviles

Speed Camera Advisory Committee – Vacant

Upcounty Regional Recreation Advisory Board – Cherian Eapen

Issues and Positions

Year in Summary

Throughout the year, each committee examines issues that directly affect the Upcounty. Sometimes, a committee may elevate an issue to the full Board for further discussion and to develop a recommendation to the County Executive and/or County Council.

Land Use and Preservation Committee

The Land Use and Preservation Committee of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board is tasked with assessing key land use issues that directly affect the Upcounty region. Throughout the year, discussions with public/private sector experts, community residents and businesses generally include diverse land use topics such as:

- Government Land Use Policies, Legislation and Regulatory Changes
- Transportation Programs and Priorities
- Emerging Demographics and Market Trends
- Economic Development
- Environmental Protection and Historic Preservation

Committee meetings and presentations involve direct, local community participation. This participation offers a more informed and pragmatic approach to ensuring that land use policies in the Upcounty region are supportive of the community's vision for healthy, vibrant and sustainable neighborhoods.

The fiscal year 2011 brought further budgetary constraints for the national, state and county government as the economy continued to struggle, but with some positive signs of stabilization and emerging growth. While the projected budget deficit for 2011 was considerably smaller than for 2010, the cumulative impact of year-over-year government budget cuts to County agencies was in many ways more difficult with reduced services to county residents, re-organization of agencies and employee furloughs and layoffs. Funding sources for key Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and transportation priorities such as the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) remain unallocated and speculative. However, a positive outcome of these budgetary conditions was that it created a renewed community focus on understanding the role of the County to create positive economic development conditions and higher quality of life through land use and transportation investment policies. Following is a summary of the key Board discussions and recommendations that focused on several of these County initiatives.

Economic Development

On September 20, Doug Wrenn, President-elect of the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce described the competitive nature of economic development and growth of the Upcounty region with neighboring jurisdictions such as Frederick County/City. He presented a comparative assessment indicating that the costs for new development and especially redevelopment in Montgomery County was much higher both in terms of financial costs, time and regulatory rules. Combined with lower housing costs, the attractiveness for employers to 'skip over' Germantown and favor Frederick as a location was a very real dynamic being felt by business owners in Germantown.

Tina Benjamin, Chief of Staff and Manager for Special Projects for the Montgomery County Department of Economic Development, presented a snapshot of the County's economic conditions and explained that businesses are not risking expansion or relocation and that the saving grace for Montgomery County is due to the Federal Government, which has a stabilizing effect on the County's office-space occupancy rates. She described the recently introduced Montgomery Business Development Corporation, a new entity formed to augment the County's ability to attract and retain high quality employers.

In a letter sent to the County Executive on March 1st on behalf of the UCAB we provided the following recommendations:

- ***The Department of Economic Development must take a more aggressive approach towards planned economic development in the Upcounty.***
- ***The CCT must be built as soon as possible.***
- ***Effort must be made to simplify the development application process for businesses.***
- ***Tax breaks for business that offer employment potential may be more than offset by additional revenue from income tax on employees.***

Planning for Montgomery County's Future

On October 18, M-NCPPC Planning Board Chair Francoise Carrier presented her vision of Montgomery County, offering several key demographics that will shape future land use policies. She specifically described the aging population of the County and how important it will be to house and employ new residents that are projected to move into the region over the next 20 years. This new growth means the 'urbanizing' of the county and it will likely be in vertical form. Ms. Carrier also stated that full reviews of Upcounty area master plans were unlikely over the next few years, but minor amendments to existing master plans were possible. In an effort to streamline the M-NCPPC, planning staff are being re-organized to form interdisciplinary teams in three geographic areas. Ms. Carrier also reinforced the Planning Board's commitment to maintaining policies and codes that support and strengthen the Agricultural Reserve.

On December 13, Planning Department Director Rollin Stanley presented further demographic data suggesting the aging of the county and concerns about how to supplement this important, but diminishing assessable tax base to support the County. Mr. Stanley expressed the need for the County to urbanize in key transit-oriented locations as greenfield development is a thing of the past in the county. Greyfields (i.e. parking-lots) are the future redevelopment opportunities given the County's commitment to maintaining the Agricultural Reserve and stable residential neighborhoods. Mr. Stanley gave an overview of the Zoning Ordinance Re-Write initiative which seeks to simplify and consolidate decades-old codes so that the ordinance can be more readily understood by everyone, provide a more predictable outcome of form, and be codified in a manner that is consistent with long-standing growth and preservation policies.

The UCAB continues to strenuously support policies and initiatives that strengthen and preserve the Agricultural Reserve so that existing residents and future generations may enjoy the many benefits to our environment and our health that the Ag Reserve affords.

Budget

In January 2011, UCAB sent a letter to the County Executive and the County Council with respect to the CIP budget.

UCAB thanked the County Executive for commencing the long-planned and long-needed renovation of the Gaithersburg Library while at the same time, setting up an interim library at Lakeforest Mall. The Board also urged the County to move forward with three projects that are presently in the facilities planning or design stage. Those projects are the North Potomac Recreation Center, the Travilah Fire Station and the Clarksburg Fire Station. UCAB further noted that three other upcounty projects that are in the planning stages should continue toward development. Those projects are the Shady Grove Library, the Shady Grove Fire Station and the Clarksburg Library.

On February 28, 2011, Council members Craig Rice and Hans Reimer presented an overview of the county budget. Within this presentation Mr. Rice noted the virtues of the Upcounty winning the Certificate of Need for a new hospital (Holy Cross in Germantown). He stressed that whether in Clarksburg or in Germantown, the Upcounty would benefit tremendously in terms of job creation, economic stimulus and the increased quality of life brought about by greater access and proximity to a major healthcare provider.

The UCAB does not take a position on the location of the hospital, but agrees that a new hospital in the Upcounty region is a needed community asset.

Transit

On December 15, 2010, UCAB presented testimony before the Maryland Transit Administration with respect to the Corridor Cities Transitway. *Consistent with its previously stated position, UCAB asserted that the transitway should be planned and constructed in the near future since its implementation is an integral part of the planned Great Seneca Science Corridor. UCAB has not taken a position on whether the transitway should be light rail or rapid bus transportation in dedicated lanes. Instead, UCAB has urged that the transitway simply be built.*

Quality of Life Committee

The Quality of Life Committee (formerly the Social Issues Committee) has spent the 2010-2011 year examining issues and concerns related to the quality of life in northern Montgomery County which often intersect with issues of interest to the Land Use and Preservation Committee. The Committee has gathered information on a wide range of social, cultural, educational, recreational, health and safety issues. The Board recognizes that the County faces a difficult financial environment as part of the nationwide economic downturn. Given these circumstances, the committee has attempted to develop recommendations and actionable suggestions for the benefit of the citizens of the upcounty region that take into account these trying economic times.

Public Safety

The UCAB has strongly supported the planning and construction of two new fire stations in the upcounty. In 2009, the Kingsview Station became operational. In the summer of 2010, several board members were present when the Milestone station became operational.

UCAB continues to support the construction of a fire station in the rapidly-growing Clarksburg area.

Citizens' Forum

On October 25, UCAB hosted a community forum where we met with and heard the concerns of a number of groups with a significant footprint in the upcounty. Those groups included: (1) The African Women's Council, based in Germantown, which is running literary programs at the Germantown Community Center and the Casey Community Center in Gaithersburg; (2) The Sugarloaf Citizens' Association, which seeks to preserve the Agricultural Reserve; (3) The Spanish Catholic Center of Catholic Charities, which provides immigrant services in the Gaithersburg area; (4) The Gaithersburg Neighborhood Opportunity Network, which seeks to create "communities that care" at the neighborhood level; (5) the Damascus Library Advisory Committee, which reported an upsurge in clientele during hard economic times; (6) the Maryland Multicultural Youth Centers, based in part in Germantown, which works one-on-one with low income and at-risk youth; (7) the Greater Goshen Civic Association, which supports M-83 as proposed in the Master Plan and opposes development in the Agricultural Reserve; (8) Liberty's Promise, which works with three high schools (including Gaithersburg High School) to provide after school programs and internships; (9), the Clarksburg Civic Association, which seeks the UCAB's support in expediting the completion of the town center; and (10) the Upcounty Health Alliance, which is concerned about the closing of the Emergency Center in Germantown operated by Adventist, should Holy Cross obtain the certificate to construct a hospital in Germantown.*

** This discussion took place prior to the State approval of Holy Cross' application.*

Activity in Annapolis

On November 15, as a predicate to the winter legislative session in Annapolis, the Board met with Melanie Wenger, Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Relations, and several State senators and delegates from the Montgomery County delegation. Ms. Wenger stressed that the County's priorities include the implementation of federal health care reform, benefits for community colleges as well as the Universities at Shady Grove, and the County's opposition to shifting the responsibility of teachers' pension costs from the state to individual counties. She explained that the County would seek \$163 million for school construction funds. The state representatives discussed issues such as aid to local government, the pension issue, funding for transportation, and efforts toward getting a fair share of state monies for Montgomery County.

Senior Issues

On November 22, the Quality of Life Committee and the Land Use and Preservation Committee met jointly with Charles Smith from the Aging and Disability Services Division of the Department of Health and Human Services to discuss the anticipated increase in the senior population that is often called the “senior tsunami.” He explained that over 15% of the county’s population is over 65 and that while the senior growth has historically been concentrated in the southern part of the county, it is expected to become a significant issue all over the county by 2030. In Mr. Smith’s view, the trend toward aging-in-place may not be the best policy since it is much harder for seniors to obtain adequate services in the upcounty because of limited transportation options. He also reminded the Board of the limited English proficiency for many seniors of various ethnic/cultural groups and explained that some groups may not be as organized with respect to addressing senior issues. Mr. Smith stressed the necessity of community-operated HELP groups and other agencies providing assistance to seniors and that the Montgomery County Commission on Aging wants to assist as well.

UCAB will continue to monitor this issue.

Reform Commission and Structural Reform of the Regional Centers

On January 18, 2011, UCAB sent a letter to the Reform Commission with respect to the importance of the five Regional Service Centers in Montgomery County. We urged the Commission to maintain the staffing of these centers in fiscal year 2012 at the same level as in the fiscal year 2011 budget which already reflected a reduction from previous years. The County Executive has subsequently recommended merging the Regional Service Centers’ administrative support functions with those of the Office of Community Partnerships and the Commission for Women as a cost savings.

In testimony before the County Council in April 2011, UCAB recognized the need for cost savings but urged the Council to ensure that the Regional Service Centers be adequately staffed to perform their vital functions. In UCAB’s view, the directors of the several Regional Service Centers reflect the face of the county in individual neighborhoods.

Clarksburg

The March 14th meeting of the full board was substantially devoted to the quality of life in Clarksburg, which has been beset by numerous problems as that community has grown in the past decade. The speaker was Jennifer Russel, the Chair of the Clarksburg Infrastructure Working Group that was established by the County Council. She explained that the challenge of the group has been to not look backward, but to move forward. Ms. Russel explained that many of the obligations identified fall on developers to keep their promises made to the county and to the residents. The three major developments thus far have been the Clarksburg Town Center, Clarksburg Village and Arora Hill with the main focus on the town center. The Committee was instructed to prioritize the necessary infrastructure that directly benefits Clarksburg and then recommend how each element could be financed. For example, impact taxes could be used to improve Stringtown Road. She reminded the Board that private infrastructure fees can be assessed by the developers of Clarksburg Villages and Aurora Hills, though that has not been done to date.

Upcounty Hospital

One of the biggest issues with respect to our quality of life has been the need for a new hospital situated in the Upcounty. The two competing applicants were Adventist Healthcare and Holy Cross. In January 2011, the Maryland Health Care Commission selected Holy Cross to construct a hospital adjacent to the campus of Montgomery College, Germantown. At the April 11th full board meeting, UCAB met with Dr. Sanjay Rai, the Interim Provost of the Germantown campus who discussed the growth of that campus as well as the planned biosciences education building for which ground was broken in early 2011. Then, Ms. Eileen Cahill of Holy Cross gave a presentation regarding plans for the hospital. She explained that the hospital will be a teaching hospital and that the nursing program at Montgomery College will be integrated into the hospital's operation. Ms. Cahill explained that Holy Cross expected to apply for permits during the summer and fall of 2011 and planned to break ground before the end of the calendar year. She projected that it would take about two years to complete construction with the target date for opening of the hospital being early 2014.

Other Areas of Interest and Concern

UCAB met with the leadership from several homeowner associations in the fall of 2010 about their challenges to maintain safe and attractive communities without **the ability to collect unpaid assessment fees from property owners**, especially when the property is in foreclosure proceedings. In April, the State Assembly passed Bill 1246 which allows a four-month lien on the property when the house/condo is sold with a limit of \$1,200 that is collectible.

UCAB members were early supporters for an **increase in the alcohol tax**.

UCAB will continue to examine:

- a) the State Assembly's discussions in 2011-2012 related to **septic systems**;
- b) **impacts of the State's "Plan Maryland" initiative on our local planning and zoning ordinances and practices**; and
- c) ways that county government can better **leverage public land acquisition and use**.

The **Upcounty Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)** was established under the partnership of the Department of Recreation and the Upcounty Regional Services Center. The members of the Upcounty YAC focused on developing leadership skills and completed two community service projects; one was making stuffed toys for sick children, and the other was collecting and repairing bikes for use in other countries and for temporary workers at the Crabbs Branch Workers Center. UCAB hopes to see this program continued.

2010-2011 UCAB Guest Speakers

September 20, 2010	Tina Benjamin, Manager, Special Projects, DED Barbara Kaufmann, Manager, Workforce Development, DED Doug Wrenn, Chairman-Elect, GGCC Hilary Schwab, President, Poolesville Area Chamber
October 18, 2010	Francoise Carrier, Chairperson, Montgomery County Planning Board
October 25, 2010	Community Forum
November 15, 2010	Melanie Wenger, Director, Office for Intergovernmental Relations
November 22, 2010	Charles Smith, Aging and Disability Services, Department of Health and Human Services (a joint committee meeting)
December 13, 2010	Rollin Stanley, Planning Director, M-NCPPC Pamela Dunn, Planning Staff, M-NCPPC
January 24, 2011	Leslie Hamm, Manager, MC311 Customer Service Center
February 28, 2011	Council members Craig Rice (D-2) and Hans Riemer (at-large)
March 14, 2011	Jennifer Russel, Principal /Planning Director, Rodgers Consulting
April 11, 2011	Dr. Sanjay Rai, Vice President and Provost, Montgomery College-Germantown Eileen Cahill, Vice-President, Government and Community Relations Holy Cross Hospital
May 16, 2011	Richard Josephson, Director of Planning Services, State of Maryland
June 6, 2011	County Executive Isiah Leggett (UCAB's annual meeting)

Testimonies and Correspondence



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

October 19, 2010

Nancy Floreen, President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Re: Zoning Text Amendment 10-12, RDT Zone –
Child Lot Standards

Dear Ms. Floreen:

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board has reviewed Zoning Text Amendment 10-12, RDT Zone – Child Lot Standards and herein submits the following comments on the amendment. The Board requests that the Council members consider these comments as part of its deliberation with respect to the amendment.

The Board submits that the amendment should be adopted with the exception of certain language contained in Section 59-C-9.41. In the Board's view, the amendment constitutes appropriate and necessary clarification of existing rules with respect to Child Lots in Rural Density Transfer Zones and is designed to promote agriculture as the primary land use in those sections of Montgomery County that have been designated for agricultural preservation.

The Board's one concern is with Section 59-C-9.41. In that regard, the Board agrees with the September 14, 2010 comments of the Montgomery County Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board ("APAB") to the effect that language in this section of the amendment will run counter to the stated purpose of the amendment by unnecessarily harming the future viability of agricultural operations and by establishing a standard requiring the retention of a transferable density right ("TDR") for farm tenant dwellings as well as child lots. Farm tenant dwellings are generally small homes or mobile homes which are frequently used by seasonal workers.

As the APAB aptly pointed out in its comments, it is often necessary for farmers performing agricultural services to provide tenant housing associated with on-farm local food production. In the current economic environment, many farms do not have retained TDRs and this circumstance enables farmers to request and obtain tenant housing. If a TDR is required for each tenant dwelling, it would inappropriately limit the future flexibility of agricultural operations in the Agricultural Reserve and thereby act to the detriment of preserved county farms.

County Council President Floreen
October 19, 2010
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In sum, the Board supports the adoption of Zoning Text Amendment 10-12 on Child Lot standards so long as the proposed changes to this amendment are adopted¹. The Board thanks the County Council for its consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



Joel M. Cockrell
Chair

cc: Isiah Leggett

¹ The Board understands that the PHED Committee reviewed ZTA 10-12 and that the staff report to the Committee indicated that the objectionable language was akin to a scrivener's error. We urge the Council to reach the same conclusion, and remove the objectionable language from the proposed Zoning Text Amendment.



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Testimony on the Corridor Cities Transitway Project December 15, 2010

Good evening, my name is Joel Cockrell and I am the Chair of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board for the 2010-2011 year. The Board is composed of 20 residents from the various communities that comprise the Upcounty or the northern half of the county. We are nominated by the Executive and confirmed by the County Council. The Board works in close proximity with the staff of the Regional Services Center in Germantown.

The Upcounty Board has supported the Corridor Cities Transitway since the introduction of the project though we have not taken a specific position on whether the mode of service should be bus rapid transit or light rail. Many parts of the Upcounty are different from the remainder of Montgomery County since, at present, we are far more reliant on the automobile for transportation due to the limited reach of public transportation. Metro stops at Shady Grove Road. The MARC train system, which I use for commuting purposes, largely runs only during morning and evening rush hours and is susceptible to delays for CSX freight trains. Bus service has improved but is nonetheless limited in some areas. For example, in Damascus, where I live, we are served by only the #90 bus.

As the November 2009 study performed by the Maryland Transit Administration with the support of the State Highway Administration provides, the alignment for this system has been a part of the County's planning goals since the 1980s. This 14 mile transitway is designed to link the Shady Grove metro station with the communities of Gaithersburg, Germantown and Clarksburg and relieve traffic congestion on I-270. In the past few years, the Montgomery County Planning Board and the County Council debated whether to modify the former Gaithersburg West Master Plan with respect to several residential and business/commercial developments such as the Kentlands commercial development, the Crown Farm property and most of all, the Life Sciences Center. These changes are now known as the Greater Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan. To accommodate these critically important developments, proposals were made to realign to CCT so that stations would be located in easy walking distance of these work and home destinations.

This revised CCT alignment was first analyzed in the November 2009 study. The MTA found that routing the CCT closer to Kentlands, Crown Farm and the Life Sciences Center would draw as many as 42,000 daily boarders, making either light rail or rapid bus service eligible for federal financial support. Then, on May 4, 2010, the County Council unanimously approved the Greater Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan. In that new plan, the Council held that the CCT is the centerpiece for the plan's vision for the Life Sciences Center. It further stated that the CCT will enable people who work in the Life Sciences Center to live in nearby communities connected by transit.

And, now on November 30 of this year, the Supplemental Environmental Assessment required by the proposed CCT re-alignment has found that there will be little adverse consequences from this change.

At bottom, the CCT is a win-win project for all concerned. There is virtually no opposition to this plan. It is our understanding that the Governor will select a preferred alignment, and perhaps the mode of travel (light rail or rapid bus), in the early months of 2011. Then, where do we go next? Should this project stand in line behind the Baltimore Rail System and the Purple Line, both far more controversial proposals, simply because those plans got there earlier? We think not. This plan is ready to go once the Governor makes his decision. The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board strongly urges the Governor, the MTA, and county officials to: a) support the re-alignment that serves the Life Sciences Center, the Crown Farm and the Kentlands; and b) move forward expeditiously. The Greater Seneca Science Corridor Plan is a key basis for planned development in this County. The CCT is the linchpin for that plan. If the CCT doesn't get built, neither does Science City. We cannot allow that circumstance to happen.

Respectfully submitted,



Joel Cockrell
Chair



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

January 18, 2011

Dear Reform Commission Members:

I am the 2010-2011 Chair of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board, known as UCAB. We are a group of 20 individuals from the various jurisdictions that comprise the Upcounty who are appointed by the County Executive and approved by the Council. We hold monthly meetings in both full board and committee sessions with our two committees addressing “Land Use & Preservation,” and “Quality of Life.” UCAB members work closely with the Director and the other employees of the Upcounty Regional Service Center to identify issues affecting the northern half of the county, to formulate positions with respect to those issues, and to frame recommendations. We advance our positions on those issues in written submissions and oral presentations to both the County Executive and the County Council.

The Board urges the Reform Commission to recommend that the footprint of the five Regional Service Centers in Montgomery County be maintained at both its current staff size and current scope of mission. As you certainly are aware, the budget cuts for fiscal year 2011 resulted in a significant decrease in the size of the staff at all five Regional Service Centers in the county as well as a substantial narrowing of the mission of the Service Centers. Proposals to further decrease or even eliminate the Service Centers altogether, should be rejected as wholly inappropriate. In times of economic hardship, more and more citizens of the county must, of necessity, rely on governmental assistance of all kinds. Having county government employees at nearby locations will provide reassurance to all citizens that their needs will not fall through the cracks.

The Director of the Upcounty Regional Service Center and her staff manage issues affecting neighborhoods and groups in the northern part of the county as well as service delivery at the government facility located in Germantown. In the last year, numerous services such as the Department of Recreation have removed their footprint from the Upcounty due to the centralization of many county government functions. The Director and her staff have overseen a complete renovation of the first floor of the building to accommodate new government tenants and, despite the County’s current centralization approach, have actually introduced new services to the numerous communities that comprise the Upcounty. Those services include:

- MontgomeryWorks – a workforce development program of the Department of Economic Development
- The Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity – a welcome center for new county residents

- Housing Counseling/Foreclosure Prevention – a partnership program of the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, and the Housing Initiative Partnership
- The Office of Human Resources Training – a variety of training opportunities for County Government employees

Beyond the renovation of the building and the introduction of new services to the Upcounty, the Director of the Regional Service Center and her staff have been instrumental in initiating and/or facilitating numerous other issues that concern the Upcounty. For example, the Director and her Staff have:

- Overseen a successful facilitation and negotiation among the Department of Transportation, the Montgomery Village Foundation and a local developer to find a location for an upgraded transit center in Montgomery Village
- Partnered with Roberto Clemente Middle School, the Collaboration Council, and the Department of Recreation to develop a summer youth program for middle school youth
- Successfully negotiated with a local developer, Transit Services, and the Police Department to have surveillance cameras installed at the Germantown Transit Center in Germantown town center
- Successfully negotiated a partnership between Montgomery County Public Libraries, Lakeforest Mall and the City of Gaithersburg to establish interim library services in the mall during the renovation of the Gaithersburg Library
- Identified and secured the support of a Germantown business condominium association to assist the Police Department in a special operation of national scope
- Worked to assure concerned residents that all requirements had been met by a new faith congregation building a temple in the community. The Director convened a discussion of residents, the civic association leadership, and the various agencies with regulatory authority to explain the multi-agency process, information accessibility, and opportunities for public comment. The civic association was also encouraged to engage formally with the new congregation's representatives with the hopes of fostering a neighborly relationship.

Letter to Reform Commission
January 18, 2011
Page Three of Three

The recent important and innovative work performed by the Director and Staff of the Upcounty Regional Services Center, identified above, barely scratches the surface of the vital importance of this team of workers. The Director and her Staff serve as critical liaisons to the many home owners' associations and civic groups in the upcounty. In many ways, they serve as troubleshooters, seeking to resolve a myriad of issues that vary greatly from day to day.

Similarly, the five Regional Service Centers in the county facilitate the work of the five Citizens' Advisory Boards. UCAB and its sister boards simply cannot exist without the hard work of the Regional Service Center directors and staff. This county has historically stressed the importance of citizen input into local government. That input will be greatly diminished if any more cuts are imposed on either the staff or the mission of the Regional Service Centers. Thus, the input of the recreation advisory boards had been impaired by the centralization of that department.

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board urges the Reform Commission to recommend that the staffing and the mission of the Regional Service Centers in the county be maintained at current levels. This important link between citizens and government must not be further diminished.

Sincerely,



Joel M. Cockrell
Chair



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

January 18, 2011

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
Montgomery County Executive
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett:

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board herein comments on the Capital Budget to be adopted by Montgomery County for fiscal year 2012. The Board would like to thank you and the County Council for moving forward with the long-planned and long-needed renovation of the Gaithersburg Library. We also appreciate the fact that the County has opened an interim library for Gaithersburg at Lake Forest Mall. The Board urges the County to maintain its present schedule for completion of the library renovation.

At the same time, the Board requests that the County move forward on the current schedule with three projects that are presently in the facility planning or design stage.

- The first project is the North Potomac recreation center. This project has been delayed for a significant amount of time due to a problem with the acquisition of a particular parcel of land. Now that this acquisition problem has been resolved, the Board hopes that actual construction of this needed facility can commence in the near future.
- The second project in the facility planning or design stage that should also progress according to schedule is the Travilah Fire Station. The construction of the Travilah Station is needed as an integral part of the infrastructure of the Greater Seneca Science Corridor.
- The third project in the facility planning or design stage that should progress according to schedule is the Clarksburg Fire Station. Completion of a permanent fire station in Clarksburg is needed given the rapid growth of population in that suburb.

Three other upcounty projects that are in the planning stage should continue to be developed.

- The Shady Grove Library
- The Shady Grove Fire Station
- The Clarksburg Library

Given the tight economic times, use of the county's libraries has significantly increased. Construction of these two new libraries will expand service to constituents in these two areas

County Executive Leggett
January 18, 2011
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that cannot access existing locations. Similarly, continued planning and the ultimate construction of a new fire station in the Shady Grove area is necessary if the county wishes to continue with its important campaign to lower the time to respond to emergency calls.

The Board recognizes the substantial budgetary constraints that the county is facing. Therefore, it is not proposing the initiation of any new capital projects. Instead, the Board urges the County to maintain existing capital projects at the same pace as set forth in the current planning, design and construction schedules that exist for each project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joel M. Cockrell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joel Cockrell
Chair



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

March 1, 2011

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
County Executive
Montgomery County Government
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett:

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (UCAB) would like to congratulate you on your recent victory in the November 2, 2010, election. As you are aware, the state of the Montgomery County economy was of concern by many voters. We know that this is a complicated issue and would like to provide input on one key component, economic development.

Our Board has been fortunate to have received briefings from the Department of Economic Development, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), and the Gaithersburg-Germantown and Poolesville Chambers of Commerce. The following information was provided:

- Businesses are hesitant to take risks (expansion) in the current economy.
- The Department of Economic Development is focused on retaining the established businesses and government institutions as the foundation for stable economic development.
- The upcounty region faces strong economic development competition from other counties, primarily Frederick County.
- The regulatory process in Montgomery County for the approval of new businesses and business expansions is considered time-consuming and cumbersome.
- Transportation and housing issues often work against Montgomery County in its competition for business with surrounding jurisdictions.

- There is presently little coordination between Montgomery County, Frederick County, Howard County and Carroll County with respect to development and transportation issues.
- The M-NCPPC has undergone a significant reorganization to function with fewer staff and is in the process of a major zoning re-write to simplify code.

Based on this information and input from the community, the UCAB would like to make the following recommendations:

- The Department of Economic Development must take an aggressive approach towards planned economic development in the upcounty. Major transportation projects such as the Intercounty Connector should be highlighted as an advantage for business.
- We believe that tax breaks for business that offer employment potential may be more than offset by additional revenue received from income taxes on employees.
- The CCT must be built as soon as possible. Subsequent to the CCT, an enhanced bus feeder system should be considered.
- Effort must be made to simplify the development application process for businesses. It is understood that events in the Clarksburg development encouraged stringent oversight; however, the process can be reformed while maintaining proper control.
- Improve communication among officials in Montgomery, Howard, Frederick, and Carroll counties in regard to projects that will have an impact (economic, transportation, or other) on a neighboring county.
- The Department of Economic Development should intensify their efforts to provide leadership and coordination of various stakeholders, such as chambers of commerce, realtors, and educational institutions in Montgomery County.

The members of the UCAB will continue to assist you and work collaboratively to make sure that Montgomery County continues to be a highly desirable and livable community. We look forward to receiving your input and/or ideas related to our recommendations.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Joel M. Cockrell
Chair



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Testimony on the FY12 Operating Budget April 6, 2011

President Ervin, Members of the County Council:

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board recognizes the significant fiscal challenges the County faces as the Executive and the Council attempt to close the \$300 million projected budget gap. UCAB is generally supportive of the proposed budget, but we set forth the following recommendations:

1. We are concerned about the proposal to place the Regional Service Centers under the new Office of Community Engagement. If the Council accepts that proposal, it should ensure sufficient staffing to enable the Regional Service Centers to perform their vitally important functions. In that regard, the Council should consider decentralizing all of the groups that will make up this new office so that the public can be engaged on a regional basis.
2. Reconsider the proposed level of cuts for fire and rescue services.
3. We understand that an increase in the alcohol tax has passed the state senate. Take all steps to ensure that this legislation is passed and signed into law.
4. Reconsider the elimination of afterschool programs given their low cost and effective support for communities.
5. Ensure that seniors and citizens in need do not fall below the safety net level. In that regard, reexamine the proposed cuts for Health and Human Services.
6. Given the budget cuts for libraries and recreation facilities, ensure that operating hours and staffing are sufficient to satisfy the needs of the County's residents.
7. Explore opportunities for the county to leverage its lands to generate revenues, *i.e.*, land leases to non-profits.
8. Make no decision that adversely affects the Agricultural Reserve.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Cockrell
Chair

Upcounty Regional Services Center



UPCOUNTY REGIONAL SERVICES CENTER

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Catherine E. Matthews
Director

Dear Community Friend,

I want to first thank the members of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (UCAB) for their dedication to making the community a safe, secure, productive, and enjoyable place for residents and businesses alike. The region continues to evolve in its physical environment and diversity, while meeting the challenges of “growing pains” and identifying opportunities for all to participate in the development of their community.

The past several years have been difficult economically, but that’s when the best is realized; the assets we take for granted within our community like our parks, schools, local shops, entertainment, and faith centers. Our neighborhoods hold untapped resources like our neighbors who are skilled in technology, construction trades, the biosciences, landscaping, teaching, and emergency response. Opportunities for building relationships, mentoring, and just plain good neighboring are found in every community. And it’s challenging times like these when those assets, resources and opportunities should be identified and used. Creativity often results from a challenge and now is when we need those creative minds and talented hands to pull together in ensuring that our community is the best it can be.

UCAB is one of those assets, resources and opportunities to contribute to the community. The Board has taken their role seriously and has made recommendations to county officials that have been implemented or examined further. Board members are supposed to represent the Upcounty citizenry as they make recommendations for developing policy and solving problems. UCAB has represented this region and county well, and I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with them.

In closing, I also want to thank the many County and State officials, departmental staff, and civic leaders for their time and expertise generously offered to help Board members understand issues and the approaches taken to solve problems. Last, but not least, I want to acknowledge the tremendous work of my team members, Andrea Bush and Nancy Hislop, who have also assisted with the Board’s work.

As UCAB members prepare for their planning retreat in July, I am confident that they will continue to do a great job in serving the almost 300,000 residents in this northern part of the county, fondly known as the Upcounty.

Sincerely,

Catherine Matthews
Director

Upcounty Regional Services Center Team



Catherine Matthews – Director



Nancy Hislop – Program Manager



Andrea Bush – Senior Executive Aide

Upcounty Regional Services Center Boundary Map



Proudly serving over 280,000 residents of Barnesville, Beallsville, Boyds, Clarksburg, Damascus, Darnestown, Derwood, Dickerson, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Goshen, Laytonsville, Montgomery Village, North Potomac, Poolesville, Tobytown and Washington Grove

The Upcounty Regional Services Center

The Upcounty Regional Services Center (URSC) is a 100,000 square foot facility that, in 2010-2011, housed 11 agencies that offered a total of 18 different services. It is located at 12900 Middlebrook Road in Germantown, Maryland and provides a county presence for the northern region of Montgomery County where a third of the county's population or more than 280,000 people reside. The service area encompasses approximately 200 square miles and is bordered on the north by Frederick County, on the east by the Olney area, on the south by the Shady Grove Metro area and Rockville, and on the west by the Potomac River.

Administration Office

The center is anchored by an Administration Office that functions as a link to the County Executive's Office; coordinates policy making and service delivery that focus on the particular needs of the Upcounty area; and offers effective and timely problem-solving assistance to neighborhoods, individuals, community organizations, businesses, and agencies. More specifically, the team offers an effective, timely liaison between Montgomery County and its citizens and businesses, and works with individuals, community groups, regional citizens advisory boards, and other public agencies to:

- research and disseminate information;
- identify and assess regional problems and issues and facilitate solutions;
- bring community perspective to major policy issues;
- manage site evaluations for public facilities;
- promote a sense of community; and
- provide general on-site supervision of the center and build collaboration among partner agencies.

Major services provided to the public by the URSC Administration team this year included:

- providing information and making referrals for county and other governmental entities about programs and activities;
- coordinating and promoting community events to maximize citizen participation (i.e. town hall meetings, budget forums);
- assisting individuals, groups, and neighborhoods in developing solutions to local problems;
- leveraging funds/resources for community-based initiatives (i.e. transit station safety);
- serving as the public's regional access point for bus route information; and voter registration forms;
- serving as a regional repository and the public's point-of-access for government and regional planning documents (master plans, sector plans, county budgets, Capital Improvements Program, maps, ICC Study, Mid-County Corridor Study, etc.);
- providing technical assistance on County procedures for the planning and implementation of neighborhood, community, and county-wide festivals and educational events (Oktoberfest, Germantown Glory, Celebrate Damascus, etc.)
- providing education and strategic-planning assistance to groups, neighborhoods and communities for local issues;
- coordinating the scheduling of facility meeting rooms and space; and
- disseminating center and community information and special announcements through the center's webpage, mailing lists, monthly newsletter and web-based events calendar.

In a broader effort to bridge the gap between citizen needs and county public services, the Center housed services from a variety of other agencies and organizations.

Partner Agencies Providing Satellite Services in 2010-2011:

Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County 301-942-7700

Provides dispute prevention, resolution and education to individuals and community organizations. Call to schedule an appointment.

Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity 240-777-6950

This welcome center for new residents offers information and referral services, County programs and services provided by the County government as well as community organizations and non-profits. At the Upcounty Regional Services Center, the Gilchrist Center offers English as a second language (ESOL) and citizenship classes and pro bono legal services. Call for more information regarding other upcoming programs.

Housing Initiative Partnership (HIP) 301-916-5946

As a contract partner to the County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs, HIP provides foreclosure intervention counseling for Montgomery County homeowners. Bi-monthly foreclosure prevention workshops are provided followed by a one-on-one appointment with a certified housing counselor to discuss options available for families to remain in their homes or transition into other sustainable housing arrangements. Bilingual counseling services are available.

MontgomeryWorks (Department of Economic Development/Division of Workforce Services) 240-777-2050

MontgomeryWorks is Montgomery County's "One-Stop Career Center," where the State and County work together to provide free employment and training services to job seekers and employers in one place. For job seekers, the center provides computer access, workshops, job listings, access to career fairs and other career resources. For employers, the center offers employer recruitment events, and employment supportive services.

Peppertree Children's Center 301-540-1170

Montgomery County, as part of a commitment to families and children, provides space in many public buildings for community child care. Peppertree Children's Center is a contractor to the Department of Health & Human Services and offers full-time and part-time care for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years. Morning preschool is also offered. NAEYC accredited.

Department of Health and Human Services Housing Stabilization Services/Emergency Services 240-777-4448

Rental assistance
Eviction prevention
Foreclosure avoidance
Court ordered evictions
Past due or disconnected utilities
Burial assistance
Information and referral for food and prescriptions
Homeless assessment services for families with children

Income Support Programs	240-777-3420
Temporary Cash Assistance for families	
Food Stamp Program	
Transitional Emergency, Medical and Housing Assistance (TEMHA) for residents who are totally disabled and cannot work	
Medical Assistance	
Public Health	240-777-3380
Maternal and Child case management and home visitation	
“Access” nurse service, including assisting clients with Health Choice access as well as enrolling women into the County maternity program and acting as a health resource to walk-in clients	
Children’s immunization clinics	
Pregnancy tests, information and referral	
Service Eligibility Unit (SEU)	240-777-3591
Helps find health coverage for uninsured Montgomery County residents through: Maryland Children’s Health Program, Prenatal Care, Care for Kids, Dental	
Provides information and phone numbers for food, shelter, and clothing needs	
Financial eligibility required	
Dental Program	240-777-3290
General dental services to children 0-17 years	
General dental services to maternity clients enrolled in the HHS maternity program	
Emergency service limited to preliminary evaluation and provided to children and seniors who are established clients.	
Child Welfare	240-777-1742
Continuing protective service, foster care service, case management, and home visitation; assist with family reunification. Aftercare services, in-home monitoring of children returned to families.	
Guide Youth Services	301-972-0307
Serves youth and families from five school cluster communities in Clarksburg, Germantown, Damascus, Gaithersburg, and Poolesville. Services include individual and family counseling, psycho-educational/skills groups, information and referral, crisis intervention, community outreach/education, and tutoring.	
Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF)	240-777-2746
This regional CUPF office offers scheduling of meeting rooms at the Upcounty Regional Services Center, school facilities, library meeting rooms, Executive Office Building space, Council Office Building space, and school fields for community use in the Upcounty area.	
Montgomery County Public Schools	
Office of Organizational Development	301-601-0300
The mission of the Office is the organizational development of a leading, self-renewing organization focused on achieving the school system goals by strengthening the knowledge, skills, beliefs, and practices of Montgomery County Public School’s staff and stakeholders.	
Transportation Services	
This office coordinates and administers transportation services for Montgomery County Public Schools.	

Upcounty Communities

Barnesville, Beallsville, Dickerson
Boyds
Clarksburg and Vicinity
Damascus
Darnestown
Derwood
Gaithersburg
Germantown
Goshen
Laytonsville
Montgomery Village
North Potomac
Poolesville
Shady Grove
Washington Grove

UPCOUNTY COMMUNITIES

Barnesville, Beallsville and Dickerson

Barnesville, Beallsville and Dickerson, three tiny towns by Washington metropolitan area standards, feature many of the County's Rural Rustic Roads, rural zoning ordinances, and preserved open spaces. Although the area has a long history of dairy farming, much of the agriculture in the region consists of full-time and part-time cattle farming, crop farming, nurseries, and, particularly, horse farming. With over 12,000 horses in the County, the equestrian industry continues to grow and to make a nearly \$85 million contribution to the local economy.

These towns and surrounding areas are also home to several industrial facilities, including the Resource Recovery Facility (also known as the incinerator), the Mirant power plant and the privately owned Neutron Products, which handles nuclear material for medical applications. The County's Dickerson Facilities Implementation Group, which is comprised of civic leaders, along with the Sugarloaf Citizens Association, the incorporated Town of Barnesville, and a liaison from the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board, is a strong advocate for regulatory compliance at these facilities and is vigilant about preserving the rural landscape of the region. These civic representatives, the County, the State, and the facilities themselves are ongoing partners in balancing industrial, environmental and community needs.

Boyds

Affectionately known by its residents as "Home in the Country," Boyds is on the edge of the county's prized Agricultural Reserve, adjacent to the developing Germantown area as well as the 1,843 acre Black Hill Regional Park. After a decades-long struggle to prevent the development of a rock quarry, a landfill and a dense housing development, the Boyds community breathed a collective sigh of relief as more than 1,600 acres of previously corporate-owned land was placed in permanent preservation in recent years. The community and neighboring commuters were also pleased when a planned closure of the MARC train station was averted through community efforts and proposed legislation by the county's State delegation. Today, the community is focused on providing additional parking spaces for MARC train commuters, and the pending closure of the local post office.

Clarksburg and Vicinity

Clarksburg was settled in 1752 by William Clark who was a trader with the Seneca Indians. That same year Michael Dowden received a patent for forty acres on what is now Hammerhill Farm where he established a tavern, Dowden's Ordinary, which was the midway stagecoach stop between Georgetown and Frederick City on the Old Frederick Road. The ordinary was visited by many travelers including General Braddock who was encamped there en route to Fort DuQuesne during the French and Indian Wars and Andrew Jackson who dined at the ordinary while traveling to the federal city of Washington. In the mid 1800's Clarksburg was a bustling crossroads with general stores, tanneries, and blacksmith and wheelwright shops serving the local farming community. As the nineteenth century came to a close, the town had become a sleepy hamlet and would continue as such for the entire twentieth century.

Clarksburg is now transitioning from its long bucolic history to its emergence as the county's last town along the I-270 corridor. A recent study was done to determine streetscape

design guidelines for the historic district which will provide a distinct identity for the district while complementing the new town center. The first phase of residential development began with the Terrabrook planned town center adding over one hundred new families to Clarksburg by the end of 2002 with an additional 1,200 dwelling units and a town center commercial center with offices, retail and restaurants planned for completion over the next several years. Clarksburg Town Center, now owned and managed by Newland Communities, has been followed by Clarksburg Village, the largest development plan submitted to the Montgomery County Planning Board since Montgomery Village in the 1960's. Several other large residential developments have been completed or are underway or planned such as the Highlands of Clarksburg, Greenway Village (aka Arora Hills), and Cabin Branch which will bring the population to about 30,000 when completed.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission has worked closely with developers and the community to ensure that green space and parklands will be preserved, while Montgomery County Public Schools has planned for additional schools such as the new elementary school and high school which opened in 2006. The County also has plans for a new fire station, additional police presence and recreational facilities to meet the needs and expectations of its residents.

Clarksburg is also home to Montgomery County's correctional facility which opened in March 2003 with a successful transfer of over 600 inmates from the Rockville jail. Staff at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility (MCCF) maintain an open dialogue with the community providing information and responding to concerns at the bi-monthly MCCF Community Advisory Group meetings attended by neighboring residents, civic and business leaders, and government representatives. MCCF Community Advisory Group members are committed to ensuring that the facility meets the needs of the inmates and the security concerns of the community.

This past year's focus has been on: a) the closure of the Parks Department's Clarksburg Neighborhood Recreation Center; b) the County Council's vote against establishing a development district for town center; and c) facilitating the community's prioritization of physical infrastructure for Clarksburg with funding recommendations.

Damascus

Damascus is a rural commercial center and residential community located in the northeast corner of Montgomery County. It has been planned as one of the key points for the County's Agricultural Reserve and Rural Open Space initiatives. The Damascus town center is located at the headwaters of four major stream systems; the Patuxent River, Bennett Creek, Great Seneca Creek, and the Hawlings River, which give it a unique environmental system of great importance to the well-being of the Chesapeake Bay. The Revised Damascus Master Plan, while recognizing its environmental sensitivity by striving to create a green environment through the use of green technologies and reducing land use density in the Patuxent Watershed, provides a moderate amount of growth in and adjoining the town center. Moderate mixed uses in the town center, increased pedestrian and bicycle connections and increased housing opportunities are among the landmarks of the plan. Maintaining the unique contrast to the extensive development in nearby Clarksburg and adjoining counties is a paramount goal of the master plan.

Although not incorporated, Damascus is well-represented by several local organizations that work with County officials on community issues. Local schools are the heart of the

community and experienced considerable over-crowding once development of the Clarksburg area was underway. The opening in 2004 of the new Rocky Hill Middle School and in 2006 of Clarksburg High School has since alleviated overcrowding in the Damascus School Cluster. The Damascus Community Recreation Center, which opened in 2004, has become a center of community activities and meetings. The Damascus Heritage Society has established a heritage museum that highlights the history and heritage of the area. Committee members secured former portable classrooms from Montgomery County Public Schools for use as a temporary facility and gathered local artifacts for display. They have sponsored several successful annual fundraisers to obtain the matching funds required for a state grant and have sought the guidance of experienced curators for display design. The museum officially opened during the fall of 2009. The community continues to hold their “Celebrate Damascus!” event in July and a community fair in September.

Darnestown

The Darnestown area is approximately 12 square miles and is centered at the intersection of Darnestown and Seneca Roads. It was originally colonized in the 1750s. Darnestown Road (or Route 28) was an old Indian trail and is recognized as one of the oldest roads in Montgomery County. William Darne of Virginia, married Elizabeth Gassaway, the daughter of a wealthy landowner. They settled at the intersection of Darnestown and Seneca Roads and established an Inn and a tavern. In 1812, the area was named Darnestown in their honor. By the 1820's, the town began to blossom and hosted a wheelwright, the Grist Mill, a blacksmith, a physician, a post office and a variety of other businesses. The stagecoach passed through the area from Georgetown to the river. After the Civil war, Darnestown experienced an economic downturn due to the increased popularity of the railroad, which bypassed the area. The mill business decreased and some farmers tried their hand at tobacco farming. This proved to be unprofitable for most and many people left the area. It wasn't until World War II that Darnestown began to grow and prosper again. This was mainly due to the government hiring more employees and the push for an improved road system.

Approximately 5,000 people live in the Darnestown area today where a small commercial village area exists at the same intersection as more than two and ½ centuries ago and its position along Route 28 is one of the key gateways to the Agricultural Preserve on the Western side of the county. The Darnestown Square Heritage Park that is expected to be completed in spring of 2012 will be an added feature to the community.

Derwood

The small, unincorporated town of Derwood began its development in the late 1800's with the opening of the Metropolitan Branch of the B & O Railroad. Although the town served as a commercial center, it did not experience the accelerated growth that its neighbors, Rockville and Gaithersburg, experienced. In 1954, the Derwood Station was destroyed in a fire, and the town remained mostly undeveloped until the construction of Metro's Shady Grove Station in 1984.

Derwood is now a community of approximately 2,000 residents living primarily in single-family homes adjacent to Lake Needwood. As home to Metro's last stop on the Red Line, the area has become a major transit hub. In keeping with smart growth concepts, the revised Shady Grove Sector Plan designates the area surrounding the Metro station as a high-density residential and commercial area. Although at this time, the area immediately

surrounding the Metro station remains an industrial park, the Smart Growth Initiative Implementation Advisory Group (SGIIAG) has been established by the County Executive to provide advice and guidance on matters relating to or arising out of the implementation of the Montgomery County Smart Growth Initiative. Two UCAB members, Andres Aviles and Kevin Linck, currently serve on SGIIAG.

Gaithersburg

Gaithersburg is in the heart of Montgomery County and is the largest incorporated area in the Upcounty. The city has been recognized nationally as one of the top cities in which to live in the United States and is home to a large number of home-based businesses. It started as a small settlement called Log Town in 1765 and was incorporated as the City of Gaithersburg in 1878. Now the city has a diverse population of more than 52,600 residents with 58% white, 14.5% African American, 14% Asian, and 20% of Hispanic origin. The city is administered by a mayor, city manager and city council government. It also has its own planning commission and board of appeals that oversee development and zoning matters.

Gaithersburg features several mixed-use developments that make use of many “smart growth” concepts which include the Kentlands and Lakelands featuring walkable communities with residences and businesses in close proximity. These communities remain an attractive destination for both consumers and home buyers. The Washingtonian/Rio development also continues to attract large numbers of people to its commercial area. The City continues to be an active stakeholder in the development of the Great Seneca Science Corridor Plan and has representation on the Plan’s advisory committee.

Germantown

The evolution of Germantown from a village crossroads in the 1840’s to its designation in the 1974 *Germantown Master Plan* as a corridor city in the *General Plan* for Montgomery County has been astounding. This 11,000 acre three-by-five mile area bounded by Great and Little Seneca Creeks and bisected by I-270 was to be developed into a “new community” similar to Columbia and Reston. However, because of fragmented land ownership, Germantown could not be developed by a single developer. To offset this problem, the County government assumed the role of coordinator, working with multiple landowners to create a cohesive “new town.” This approach was a first in the United States with local government attempting to guide and stage development through its planning, zoning, subdivision, and capital programming processes.

The 1989 revision of the master plan recommended some changes that would make the town center the principal activity center for Germantown and would establish a residential character in selected areas with single-family detached homes to provide a broader mix of housing types so that Germantown could evolve into a full life-cycle community. The projected proportion of single-family detached homes was increased from 18% to 29% as the proportion of single-family attached and multi-unit dwellings was decreased from 58% to 31%.



Efforts of county staff, the local chamber of commerce, and developers are defining the town center even more as recommended in a recent report by the Urban Land Institute. The report identifies and defines a new business district for the town that should increase the number of jobs in the community. The Department of Economic Development has staff assigned to concentrate efforts in attracting large employers to Germantown and the immediate success of the Germantown Transit Center will support commuting needs of that new workforce. The 1989 master plan was updated in the fall of 2009 with the approval of the County Council to focus on the development of Germantown's employment sector as a major priority.

Germantown residents are now seeing the fruition of the town center as it continues to develop with office and retail establishments, restaurants, the activities of the new library, a hotel, and plans for an urban park. In reaction to this development, older commercial areas have initiated renovations to attract major retailers and to extend the feel of the town center's architecture. This has not come too soon for the 80,000 plus residents who are enjoying the ambiance that Germantown offers to all ages and ethnicities. New signage now announces upcoming performances at the BlackRock Center for the Arts which is located in the heart of the town center and not too far away, the Discovery Sports Center and SoccerPlex has serves as home and practice fields for two professional soccer teams, the Washington Freedom and the D.C. United.

Goshen

Goshen, an unincorporated community of about 15,000 residents with a minimum of two-acre zoning, has a picturesque landscape of rolling hills separated by streams and creeks providing abundant water through-out the land. It had its beginnings in 1743 when a land grant consisting of Benjamin's Square and Land of Goshen was deeded to Benjamin Woolingford. By 1790 there were two mills built by the Pigman family, a copper mine and log cabin used as the mill store on property known as Pigman's Purchase. Later that log cabin became part of the Goshen store and post office. Prosperous farmers grew tobacco, corn and wheat on this fertile land and remained for many generations. As a result, there are many historical homes in Goshen including Woodbourne Plantation, Fertile Meadows, Avalon and Black and White Inn which was the only establishment where African American travelers could stay during the era of segregation. Prathertown, also located in Goshen, is on of the oldest African American communities in the county. It as founded in 1883 by emancipated slaves. The Goshen Civic Association and Goshen Historical Preservation Society are dedicated to preserving Goshen's quality of life, looking to the future while preserving its rich history for generations to come.

Laytonsville

Laytonsville, originally known as Cracklintown for its renowned crackling bread, was founded in 1782 by John Layton. The original town extended beyond its current municipal limits along Sundown Road toward the Hawlings River. Route 108 was built in the early 1800's to transport cattle and pigs to the markets in Baltimore making the town a popular spot for the overnight stay of drovers. Substantial brick buildings, including the Layton House, were constructed during this time. Another factor in the development of the town is its fertile soil that has drawn farmers for over two centuries. The town does not yet have public water, but as a result of issues with water quality and the plans for the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission to construct water lines to nearby developing areas, town residents have the opportunity to hook-up to public water. Town officials continue to work with WSSC to have water service targeted for 2013-

2014. The town is governed by a mayor and town council who meet with residents on the first Tuesday of each month. Today, it is home to over 300 residents who are proud of their beautiful, historically preserved town.

Montgomery Village

Montgomery Village is home to more than 40,000 residents. It is one of the first planned communities in the area and has come to reflect the diversity of Metropolitan Washington. The Village is located northeast of the Gaithersburg incorporated city limits and is managed by the Montgomery Village Foundation, Inc., headed by its executive vice president, and a board of directors who work with the County and State on a variety of issues and concerns. The Foundation publishes a bi-weekly newspaper and provides residents with recreation programs, maintenance of common areas, architectural standards, and other amenities.

The Foundation and individual neighborhoods continue to work with the County in designing the Webb Tract for the relocation of facilities from the County Service Park. Other topics of concern for the community are the continuation of Mid-county Highway and the options that will be presented when the Village's town sector zoning period expires.

This past year, planning charrettes were held with residents who focused on future development options for the Village's shopping center, the professional office park, a parcel at the intersection of Montgomery Village Avenue and Lost Knife Road, and the golf course.

North Potomac

The North Potomac community, which can be found southwest of Route 28 and northwest of Shady Grove Road, must balance the desire to maintain the advantages of small, older communities with the need to incorporate new development. Although no new roads are immediately planned for the area, this community is not a part of the Agricultural Reserve and is experiencing new public and private development. New homes, senior housing, and commercial buildings have recently been built in the Travilah area of North Potomac establishing the new town center of Traville. The Planning Board staff held several community-wide meetings to present proposals for the Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan and to obtain community input and comment. The Plan, approved by the County Council, has received a considerable amount of testimony from residents and businesses. The plan addresses the development of the Belward Farm property by Johns Hopkins University as part of the County's plan for a world class life sciences center. Other master plan recommendations included the relocation of the Public Safety Training Academy to allow for dense residential development to provide housing for employees of the various life sciences employers, and the realignment of the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT). The density of the proposed development elicited great concern from the North Potomac community in general, especially those communities closest to the Belward and Life Sciences Center properties. Continued dialogue with community interest groups was essential in developing the final draft of the master plan. The UCAB facilitated several meetings with representatives from neighborhoods directly affected to encourage an open and healthy debate. The Master Plan's size was reduced and County officials will revisit the plan in six years. In the meantime, resident representatives serve on the Great Seneca Science Corridor Advisory Committee.

Poolesville

The incorporated town of Poolesville, named after its first resident, John Poole II, is largely independent with its own elected commissioners; the local government works in tandem with Montgomery County. The largest of the “small towns” in western Upcounty, Poolesville retains much of its rural charm while addressing issues of growth, crime and transportation. The community remains close-knit, and most residents consider Poolesville to be the County’s most desirable place to live. In that spirit, the entire town comes out each September to celebrate the community’s culture and history at Poolesville Days. Staff from the Upcounty Regional Services Center and the Department of Recreation are assisting town officials with their efforts to build a recreation center in the town.

Shady Grove

A development plan for the Shady Grove Sector, which is the area surrounding the Shady Grove Metro station, was approved by the County Council in late 2006 and it incorporates smart growth principles. This area currently houses many of the County’s industrial centers, such as bus depots, a liquor warehouse and the MCPS Food and Nutrition Services Center. The sector plan vision will transform the area into a mixed-use, transit-oriented community with amenities that will support and protect nearby residential neighborhoods. An executive team has identified and negotiated the purchase of properties for the relocation of the service park facilities currently within the sector’s boundaries. This group, which includes the Upcounty Regional Services Center staff, has also worked closely with the communities which are located near the proposed relocation sites. Details and updates about the A Smart Growth Initiative can be found at

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/puitmpl.asp?url=/Content/EXEC/cpus/index.asp>.

County Executive Leggett has also established the Smart Growth Initiative Implementation Advisory Group which includes county staff, business, educational, and technical advisors, as well as representatives of civic organizations, to provide advice on the development of this plan. In addition, the Shady Grove Sector Plan Advisory Committee, a group of residents who meet monthly with county planners, continues to monitor the implementation of the sector plan recommendations assuring that they are followed and that any problems are promptly brought to the attention of the Planning Board or County Council.

Washington Grove

More than a century ago, members of the Methodist congregations in Washington, D.C., searching for a cool, quiet spot for retreats, set up their tents in the wooded oasis that is now Washington Grove. This oak-shaded town, which retains its historic charm and summer-camp feel, is still a refuge from city life. Roy McCathran, the town's first mayor, referred poetically to Washington Grove as "...a town within a forest, an oasis of tranquility and a rustic jewel in the diadem of the great free state of Maryland." Amazingly, this is as true today as it was in 1937 when he spoke these words. The dramatic effect has been heightened by the intense urban development now surrounding Washington Grove. Only about a dozen paved roads pass through the cluster of 216 homes, most fronted by gravel and grass walkways originally designed to protect passersby from being trampled by horses. About 60% of the town’s 200-plus acres is green space. There are two forest preserves, several parks, and a small lake where residents swim in the summer and skate in winter.

The Town of Washington Grove continues to be a vibrant community governed by its mayor and town council. The town's website contains updated information on the town officials, committees, facilities, town charter, ordinances and master plan as well as its continuing interest in the development of the Shady Grove area including the county service park relocation and the development of the Inter-County Connector which opened its first section in early 2011.

Upcounty Regional Services Center

Accomplishments

2010- 2011

Upcounty Regional Services Center's Accomplishments 2010 - 2011

- Launched the Montgomery Works Program at the Center, a workforce development and recruitment services program for job seekers and employers.
- Launched a community education campaign regarding foreclosure prevention and, in partnership with the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, established counseling services at the Center.
- Launched an expanded program of the Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity's Welcome Center that offers English classes for speakers of other languages, and citizenship classes.
- As part of a countywide cost saving initiative to reduce the inventory of leased space for county services, URSC welcomed the County government's Employee Training Center.
- Brokered a successful facilitation and negotiation among the Department of Transportation, the Montgomery Village Foundation, and a local developer to find a mutually-accepted solution for an upgraded transit center in Montgomery Village.
- Partnered with Roberto Clemente Middle School, the Collaboration Council, and the Department of Recreation to develop a summer program for middle school youth.
- Successfully brokered a partnership between Montgomery County Public Libraries, Lakeforest Mall, and the City of Gaithersburg to establish interim library services in the mall during the renovation of the Gaithersburg Library.
- Identified and secured the support of a Germantown business condominium association to assist the Police Department in a special ongoing operation of national scope.
- Successfully worked to assure concerned residents that all requirements had been met by a new faith congregation building a temple in the community; identified and convened the community leadership in order to: a) explain regulatory processes; b) identify opportunities for public comment; and c) encourage engagement with the new neighbors.
- Successfully partnered with the Recreation Department to establish the new Upcounty Youth Advisory Committee that focused on leadership development, and organized and implemented two community service projects.
http://www.gazette.net/stories/05042011/rocknew205421_32545.php

- Assisted with the establishment of the Executive's Smart Growth Implementation Initiative Advisory Group; identified community stakeholders, and served on the group's steering committee.
- Successfully represented the County, Executive Branch or Upcounty region with the following committees, boards, task forces and workgroups:
 - Shady Grove Sector Plan Implementation Group;
 - BlackRock Center for the Arts Board of Trustees;
 - Upcounty Latino Network;
 - Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee;
 - Public Arts Trust Steering Committee;
 - Oktoberfest Planning Committee; and
 - Germantown Glory (County's Independence Day Celebration).
- Successfully managed contract administrative responsibilities for the Crabbs Branch Temporary Workers Center (a.k.a. Shady Grove Workers Center).
- Successfully assisted the Police Department with the kick off event for the Click It or Ticket Seat belt safety campaign in Germantown Town Center.

June 2011